



(Photo: Red Maple/David N. Johnson)

FALL COLOR REPORT 10/13/16

Northwest

Quad Cities: Rock Island, Henry, Knox, Mercer, Bureau and Stark counties have had cooler weather, keeping cool season grasses on roadsides green, especially as long as they continue to be mowed. More trees are starting to turn greenish yellow and brownish yellow. Ash have definitely started changing, with green ash to yellow, white ash to pinkish purple; red maples are showing some dark scarlet; some sugar maples are showing yellow-orange. Walnut, cottonwood, and birch trees continue to lose more leaves. Sumac and dogwood have peaked, with scarlet and grayish burgundy respectively, and they are also losing leaves. Burning bush is starting to show some burgundy.

In Carroll County, the bottomland areas, especially along the Mississippi River corridor, are showing the best color change. Silver maples are turning yellow and red, and cottonwoods are turning yellow. Walnut trees are shedding leaves fast as the little yellow leaflets "rain" across the road. Sumac and dogwood are turning red and purple in the roadside. Virginia creeper is red and looks like flames of fire climbing into the tree tops. The upland trees along the Mississippi bluffs are now showing signs of change – the hickories are turning yellow and the oaks are turning red and orange. The color is a little muted this year, due to the unseasonably warm early fall weather.

Northeast

The maples have really started showing nicely, with lots of red and orange. Some maples that are infected with "tar spot" have had reduced colors. The hickories have started to show color this week, as have box elder trees. Many oaks are still green.

The woods in Grundy County are getting very nice with oaks/hickory showing about 30% color, but still a long way from peak. Hard maples just turning as well, while honey locusts are at peak. Vines and sumac are showing 75% color. Soft maple, elm, and walnut have falling leaves. In urban areas, true soft maples have falling leaves, while soft maple varieties are still turning red/orange at 50%. Hard maples are still greenish. Burning bush and some showy shrubs are just starting to give color. Cooler weather this week has brought more color, though peak is still a week or more away.

West Central

West central Illinois is showing much more color this week, with lots of yellows and browns. Sumac are starting to show some beautiful reds and orange. Maples are showing a bit of red and orange, but many are mostly yellow. Hickories are turning yellow and brown. The understory in the forest has a lot of yellow. It is not peak season yet, but the colors are coming.

Pike, Adams, Scott, Calhoun, Brown, Jersey, Greene, and Macoupin counties: Cottonwood, sycamore, walnut, silver maple, and catalpa are starting to show yellow/brown leaves and are losing leaves. Most of the sassafras and sugar maple are starting to turn (red/yellow/orange). Most ash trees are starting to turn (red/purple/yellow); most of the sumac and creeper vines are starting to turn (predominantly red/orange). Some Hickory are starting to yellow, while most other tree/brush species are still predominantly green and maintaining their summer colors into mid-October.

Central

In Mason County, fall color is starting to come in. Green and yellow are still the dominant colors showing. There is some orange beginning to show in the tops of sugar maples.

It was a slow start for fall color at Starved Rock State Park, but leaves are now starting to turn. The main entrance road into the park off Rt. 178 is one of the most beautiful areas in the park for color. Once hikers reach the trail system, they will find pockets of color; areas that have a high number of maple trees are spectacular right now. Views from overlooks are still predominantly green, but that should change rapidly in the next few days. Fall color is about 35 - 40 % change in the Illinois River valley near Starved Rock, but good for the park's Fall Colors Weekend on Oct. 15-16.

East Central

White ash trees are showing purple and green ash and black walnut are showing more yellow. Most of the Virginia creeper and poison ivy are showing red. Sassafras this week features orange and red, with some persimmon turning yellow or orange. There are a few sugar maple and hickory trees beginning to show orange and yellow leaves. A few blackgum and red maples are a brilliant scarlet red.

South

In Clinton County, the sassafras are in full fall colors; the sumac are turning red, some sweet gum are turning yellow in more parts of the crowns. The red maples are starting to turn red in spots of the crowns.

Walnuts have dropped over 50% of their leaves in most cases, and those that remain are yellow. Honey locust have been yellowing, but are dropping leaves fast. Sumacs have mostly all reached a deep red color and contrast well with other greens and yellows nearby. Sassafras continues to show red, orange, and some yellow. Younger sweetgum trees have turned dark purple, while some older trees are just begging to turn. White ash has really developed purple-orange coloration in the past week, with healthy trees showing their fall beauty. Virginia creeper and poison ivy have a deep burgundy color and can be found around the trunks and in the canopy of other trees. Many persimmons have lost a portion of their leaves, exposing the small orange fruits with a contrasting beauty of colors. Hickories have started turning a yellow/brown in the past few days and are adding some variation in the timber. Open grown sugar maples and those on the edges of the timber, with direct sunlight, are starting to show yellow-orange colors. Those sugar maples deeper in the timber have not yet shown much color. Cool nights this week will aid in the development of more coloration. The view from the dam and at the south end of Forbes Lake in Marion County has and will continue to have some beautiful scenery for the next few weeks.

Wayne County: Most trees are still green, but the red and yellow highlights are along edges and fence rows; leaf peepers are seeing a bit more purple and yellow on ash trees.

Union County: Trees are getting more color to them, with trees in low lying areas showing good color with the sycamore trees turning yellow, sassafras and sumac displaying red and purple, maple trees showing yellow/gold. The oak trees seem to be holding onto their green color, so the uplands are still green and the low areas have nice bright color. Leaves are falling in some areas, so the colors may not last long. The weather is great, so get out and see the leaves while they are still there.

Just a little more color is showing this week at Giant City State Park. They still have a lot of green, but the south-facing bluff tops are getting a nice golden hue to them. It appears that visitors to Giant City should start seeing some great color over the next week.

Randolph County is starting to see a little bit more color, but is still weeks away from peak color. Forests, as a whole, look green with some fall browns and yellows starting to become evident. The early turners are all in color (sumac, sassafras, poison ivy, dogwood, ash). Most are red or reddish with the exception of ash (yellow).

Trees are still predominantly green at Fort Massac State Park on the Ohio River. Pecan and hickory nut trees are starting to turn a little yellow. Leaf-watchers expect more colors will start showing up in the next week or two.

Beall Woods State Park on the Wabash River: Overall, green is still dominant throughout the forest, but is beginning to be lightened with hints of yellow. Tulip trees, paw paws, and sweet gums are exhibiting most of the yellow leaves at this time. The most brilliant colors (orange, red, and yellow) can be found on the sassafras trees. While hiking through the forest, visitors may notice the deep reddish purple compound leaves of Virginia creeper at Beall Woods.